

Notes for Lecture on South Indian Folk Religion
Univ. of Wisconsin, 1994

1. Posing the problem:

1.1 Going to India, studying about Hinduism, went to Amrabad.

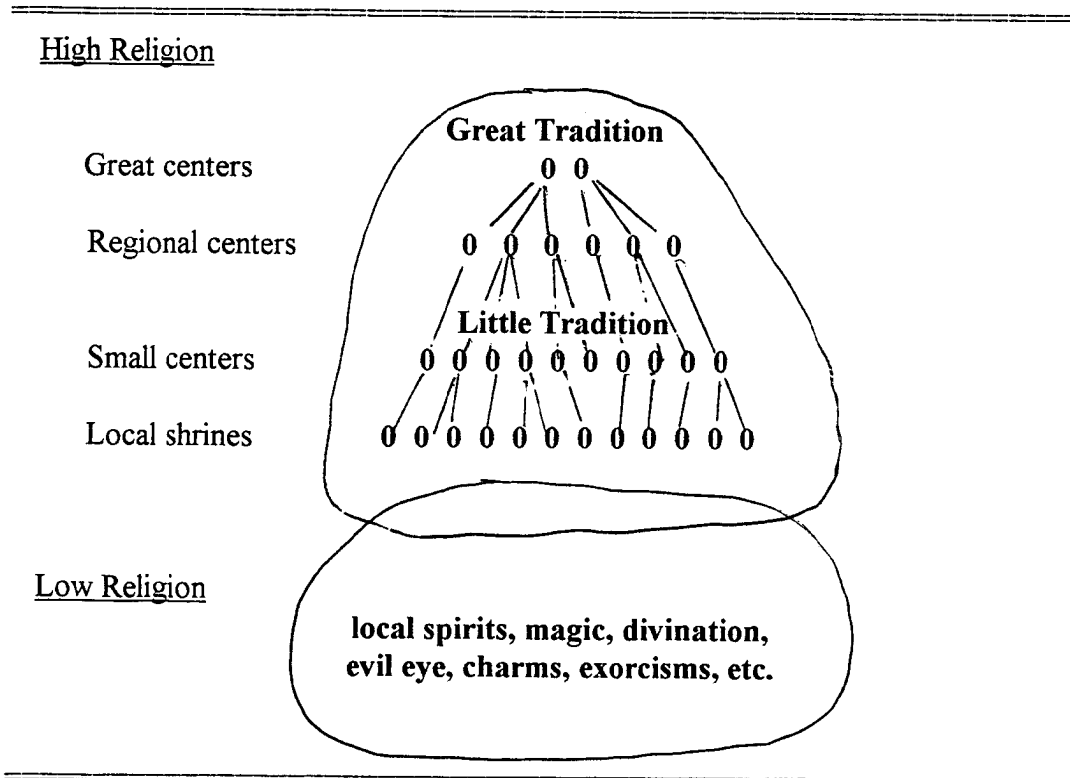
1.2 Found evidences of what Redfield called 'little tradition' Hinduism:

- temples to Siva and Rama, Brahmin purohits and pujaris, bhajans, temple worship, jatras, Hindu rites of passage, etc.

1.3 Found much that didn't fit that tradition.

- goddesses: (Maisamma, Yellama, Muthalamma, etc.) 416 in A.P.
- evil eye: (amulets, pots in the field, Ramachari's child)
- divination: (tree sap, grinding stone in pile of rice)
- magic: mantras, yentras, tantras
- medicines of many types

Figure 1
Redfield's Concepts of High and Low Tradition



2. Analysing the problem: **What defines these and how do they relate?**

2.1 High or Universal or Formal Religions: great tradition and little tradition (Redfield and Marriott). (drawing)

2.2 Low Religions: In Africa, ATR, in Korea *mukyo*, in Latin America spiritisms,
-found underlying all major high religions.

2.3 Contrast between the two in Amrabad:

Figure 2
A Comparison of Hinduism and Low Religion in Amrabad

Hinduism	Low Religion
- written texts and commentaries	- oral tradition
- formal institutional structures	- informal organization
- temples and gurudwars	- rocks in the field, lines on a tree
- Brahmin priests, sages, sadhus	- low caste priests (Washerman, Barbers, untouchables)
- male dominant gods with consorts, models of marriage	- single female spirits and brother (pothu raju)
- good versus evil	- capricious and both good/evil
- vegetarian	- blood sacrifices (crisis rites).
- cyclical and transformation rites: life cycle (purohit), temple (pujari)- annual festivals)	- crisis rites (plague, drought, village strength, sending the spirits)
- universal gods	- territorial gods (dzupu - 10 miles)
- observe caste hierarchy	- based on village boundaries

2.4 Conflict between high and low religion:

- China, Korea, Japan: Buddhism and local religions integrated.
- Latin America: Catholicism and local religions integrated
- Islam: tensions between high and folk religions, except Indonesia
- Africa: tensions between Christianity and tribal religions.
- India: examine the relationship more closely.

2.5 Example of Jatras: Regional worship.

Figure 3
Number of Jatras in A.P. by Attendance

Attendance	Number of Jatras
less than 500	3,532
501 - 1,000	915
1,001 - 2,500	301
2,501 - 5,000	342
5,001 - 10,000	173
10,001 - 50,000	109
50,001 - plus	21

Figure 4
Number of Deities and Saints in A.P. Jatras and Durgas

	Hindu	Muslim	Jain/ Parsi	Christian	Local Deities
Deities					
Male	Siva (165 forms) (associates)			Joseph	26
	Vishnu (56 forms)				
	99 - other				
Female	46				357
Animal/ Place					22
Saints					
Male	141	194	2	3	
Female	78			3	

Figure 5
Local Spirits and Saints in Andhra Pradesh

1. Female Earthly Spirits:

Adankamma, Akkamma, Alivelumamngathayamma, Allemma, Amasamma, Andlamma, Appikondamma, Arlamma, Basulamma, Bhulokamma, Bodlamma, Chengalamma, Dasulamma, Gothemma (caste deity of Malas), Irugulamma (w. of Siva), Maisamma (smallpox), Muthyalamma, Nancharamma (consort of Siva), Nukamma (patron of Kapus), Poshamma, (Tirupatamma (Lambada pujari), Yellamma, etc.

2. Female Saints:

Achchamma and Papaiah (wife deified), Akkamambas (sacrifices), Bathakamma (self revealing), Gangamma ('passing'), etc.

3. Male Saints:

Amkujmaraja, Balabhakta, Bhavanrushi (Padmasala), Brahmananda Eswara Swami, Chakali Narappa, Kamelibaba, etc.

4. Caste Deities:

Allarayappa (Mala), Biranna (Kuruva), Lingamanthuni (Golla), Gangad (Konda Doras), Matangi (Madiga), etc.

MAPS 1 - 4

3. Analysis of the problem: **Why do these low religions persist?**

3.1 Diagram of belief systems:

Figure 6

- 3.2 Modern North American belief system:
 - Greek dualism returns and divides the world:

Figure 7
Modern North American Worldview

Supernatural	Natural
- Gods, angels, demons	- Humans, animals, plants, matter
- Spiritual matters: spiritual activities	- natural matters
- Creation, miracles, prayer	- natural law
- Religion	- Science
- Faith	- Fact
- Private opinion	- Public truth

3.3 Hindu belief systems: (diagram)

Figure 8
Indian Village Realities

BEINGS	FORCES
Brahman	
Brahma, Vishnu, Siva	Karma
Other high gods	Samsara
Rakshasas, yakshasas, etc.	Dharma

Female goddesses of this earth	Magic
Capricious spirits, ghosts	Evil eye
Ancestors	Astrology
	Amulets, charms

Rishis, sadhus, saints	Ayurvedic and
Humans	Unani medical systems
Animals, plants and matter	Folk medicines, etc.

3.4 Questions asked at each level:

Figure 9
Key Questions Asked at Each Level of Explanation

High Religion	- ultimate origins, meaning and destiny of: the cosmos, humans, our corporate group and myself

Low Religion	- give meaning of life and death for the living - bring good life and deal with crises of life for the living - learn the unknown and guide decisions - bring purity and righteousness, remove pollution and injustice

Science	- deal with nature - organization of human society and self fulfillment

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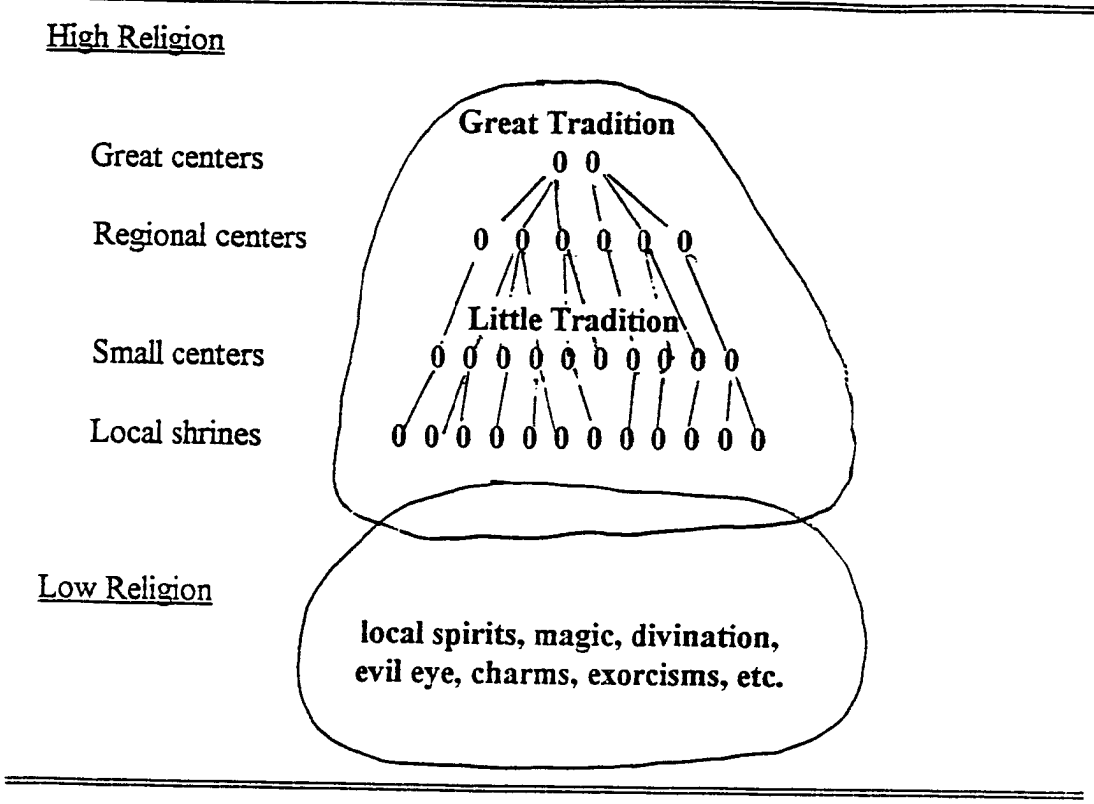


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Figure 6
An Analytical Framework
for the Analysis of Religious Systems

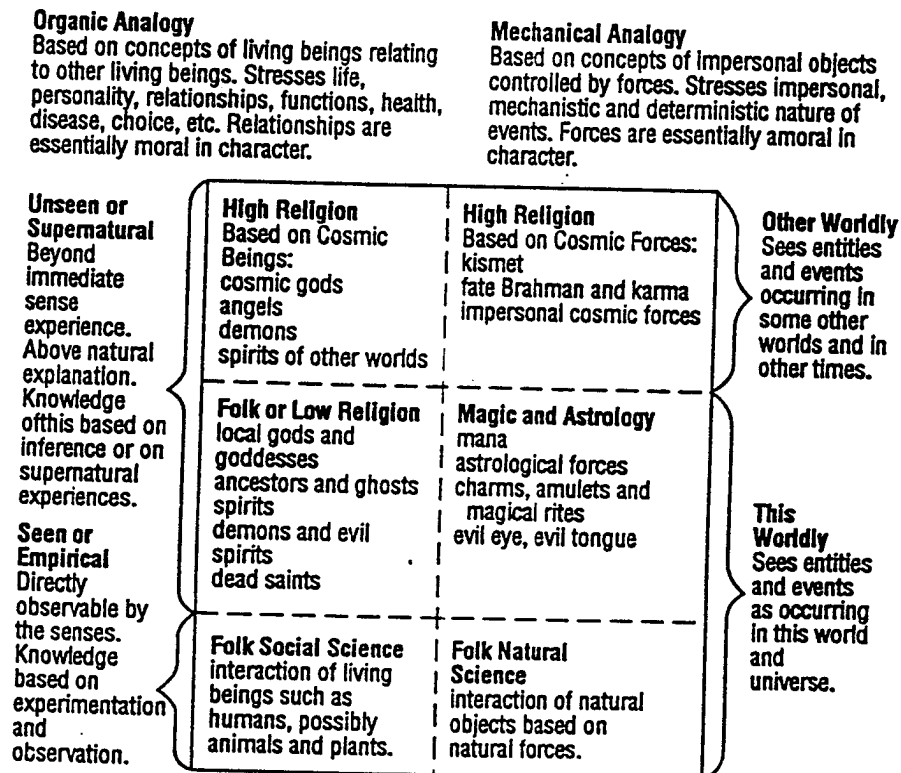


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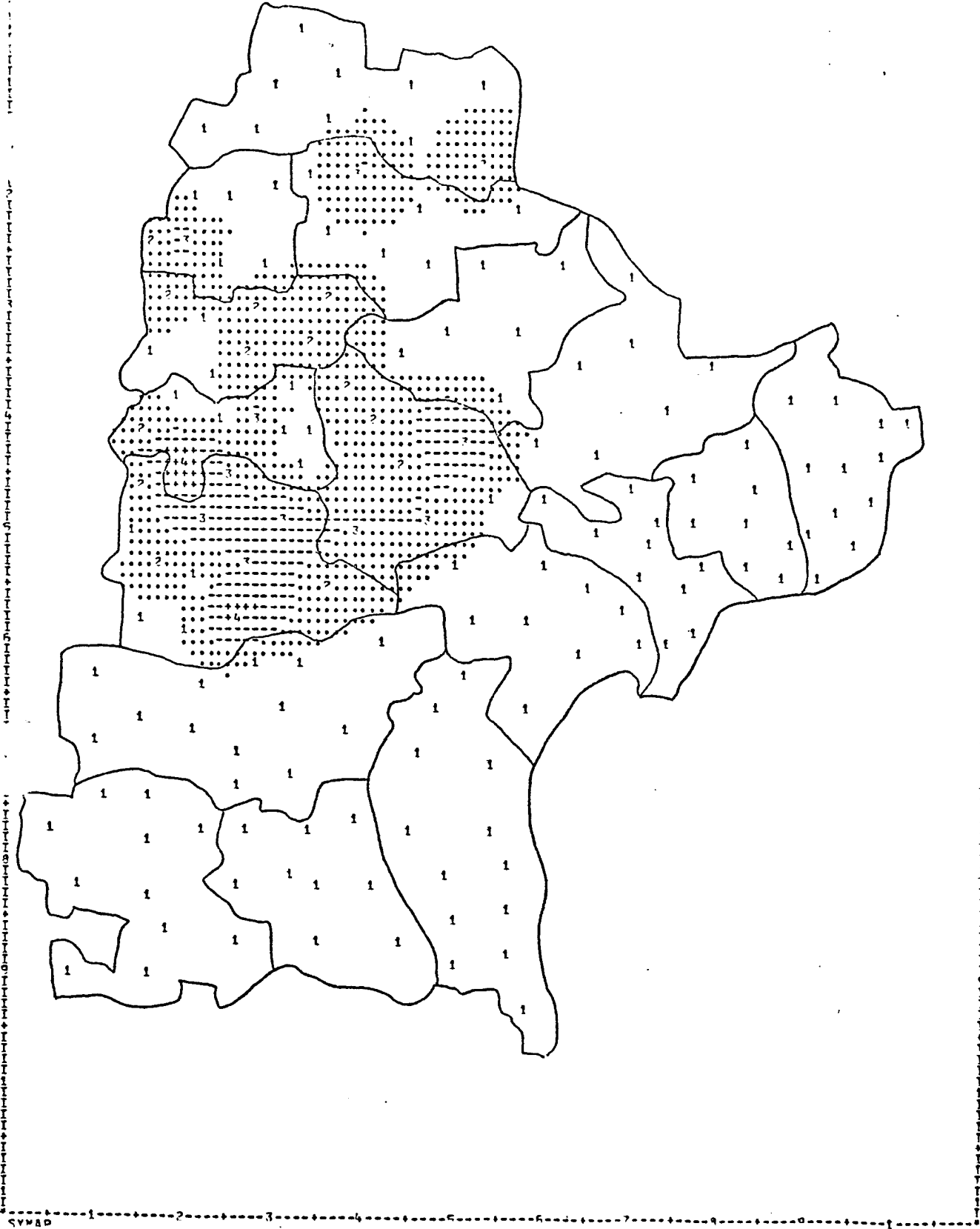
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15.8 SECONDS FOR MAP

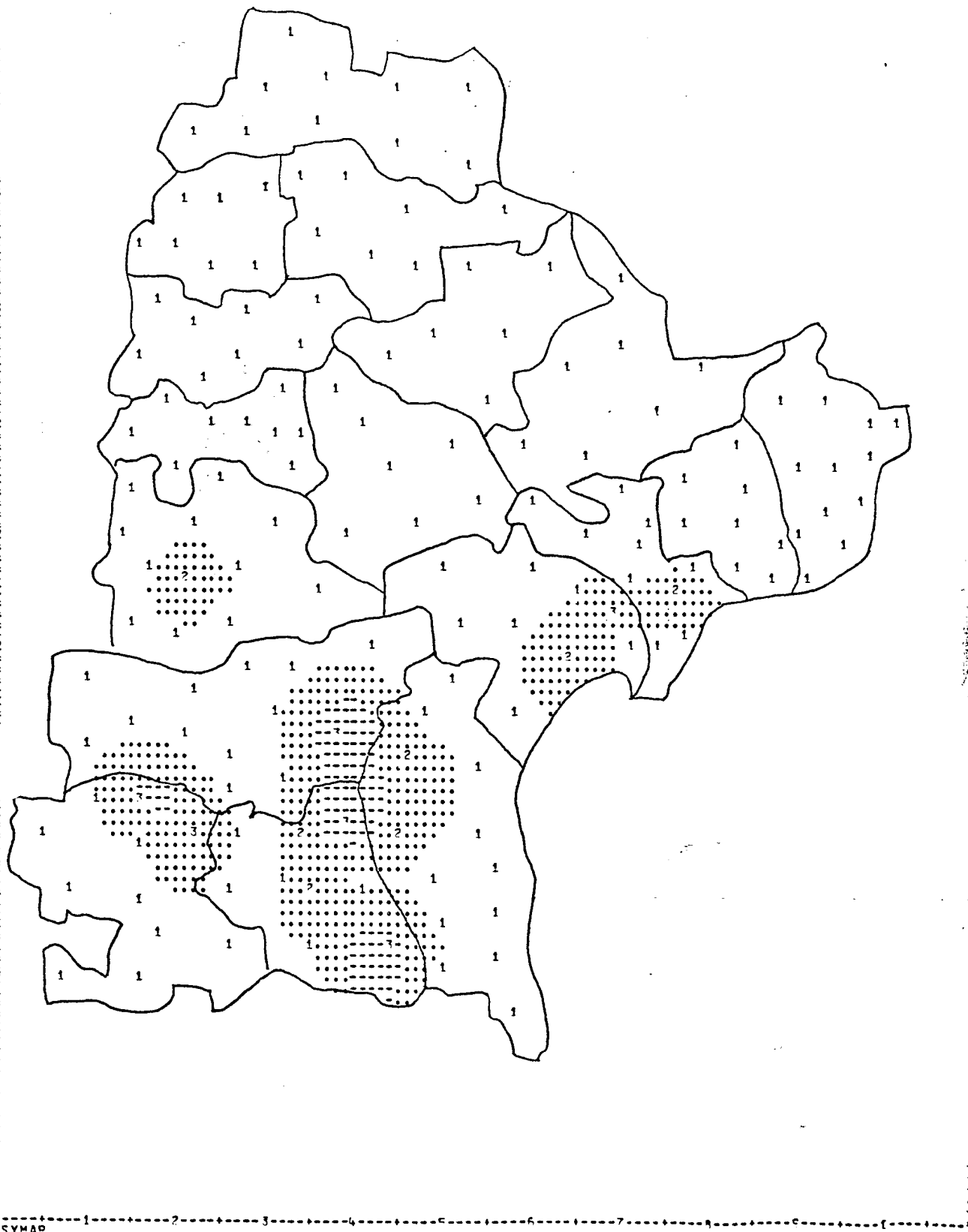
C REGIONAL VARIATION OF WORSHIP OF
 C THE DEITY MYSAMMA
 C FOR THE DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

1 VALUE EXTREMES ARE 0.00 35.00

ABSOLUTE VALUE RANGE APPLYING TO EACH LEVEL
 (MAXIMUM INCLUDED IN HIGHEST LEVEL ONLY)

MINIMUM	0.00	1.00	10.00	25.00	50.00	100.00	250.00	500.00	1000.00
MAXIMUM	1.00	10.00	25.00	50.00	100.00	250.00	500.00	1000.00	10000.00

MAP 2.



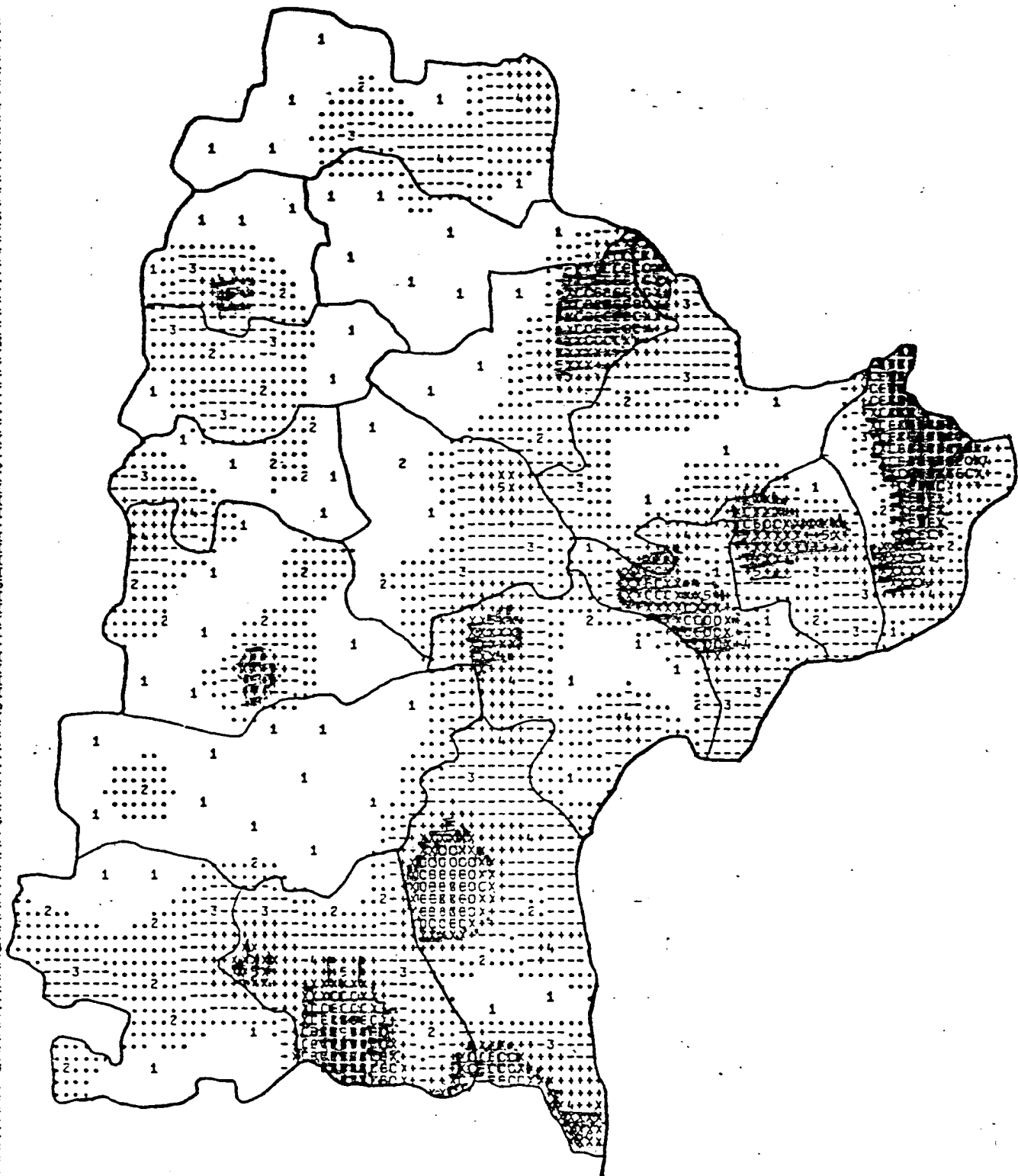
15.8 SECONDS FOR MAP
 C REGIONAL VARIATION OF WORSHIP OF
 C THE CITY KANYAKAPARAMESHWARI
 C FOR THE DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

A VALUE EXTREMES ARE 0.00 15.00

ABSOLUTE VALUE RANGE APPLYING TO EACH LEVEL
 (MAXIMUM INCLUDED IN HIGHEST LEVEL ONLY)

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MAP.3



LOCAL DEITIES (% OF ALL WORSHIP)

SYMAP

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	80+
SYMBOLS	1
FREQ.	65	32	23	15	13	4	0	3	3

MAP 4